

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES



NEWS RELEASE

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Prince William Sound Salmon Fishery News Release #11

COPPER RIVER DISTRICT: The Copper River District will open at 7:00 am on Thursday, June 21 for a 24-hour period. Waters within the king salmon inside closure area, as described in 5 AAC 24.350(1)(B), will be OPEN during this period. The cumulative sonar count to date is 626,800 fish whereas the minimum anticipated count to date is 402,000 fish. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 24-hour period that started on Monday, June 18 was 200 king, 29,000 sockeye, and 200 chum salmon. This compares to an anticipated harvest of 500 king and 51,800 sockeye salmon for this period. The first Copper River delta survey was flown this past week and management of the Copper River District is shifting to delta sockeye salmon stock management. For the week ending June 16, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 2,860 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 7,270 sockeye salmon.

BERING RIVER DISTRICT: The Bering River District is closed to commercial fishing. For the week ending June 16, the actual Bering River District survey count was 0 versus a minimum anticipated goal of 4,985 sockeye salmon. The Bering River District will open when aerial surveys document sockeye salmon escapement above anticipated counts.

MONTAGUE DISTRICT: The Port Chalmers Subdistrict will open for a 84-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 21 with an additional 60-hour period anticipated to begin at 8:00 am on Monday, June 25. This schedule is anticipated to remain in effect until further notice. The western boundary of the Port Chalmers Subdistrict is defined by lines from 60°20.00'N., 147°26.59'W. to 60°14.75'N., 147°35.35'W. to 60°02.50'N., 147°44.41'W. Prior to the first Monday in July, unless modified by emergency order, gillnets with a depth of greater than 60 meshes **WILL NOT** be permitted in the Port Chalmers Subdistrict. Regulatory closed waters and anadromous stream closures within the Port Chalmers Subdistrict will not be in effect until further notice. Harvest for the period that closed on Sunday, June 17 was 2,400 chum salmon with 26 deliveries reported.

COGHILL DISTRICT: The Coghill District, excluding waters of the WNH THA and SHA, and excluding the Granite Bay and Esther Subdistricts, will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 72-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 21. Additionally, the Granite Bay Subdistrict and the portion of the Esther Subdistrict west of a line from Esther Light to Point Perry will open to commercial drift gillnet harvest for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 21. Harvest from the period that closed Wednesday, June 13 was 79,600 chum and 10,700 sockeye salmon with 548 deliveries reported.

A portion of the Coghill weir has been installed. Ice conditions have precluded installation of the remaining portion of the weir; however, it is anticipated that ice conditions should improve and the weir should be fully operational within a few days. In lieu of the weir, tower counts have been performed and three sockeye salmon have been counted as of June 19.

Waters of the WNH SHA and THA continue to be open to PWSAC cost recovery fishing. Total hatchery cost recovery is estimated at 69% complete. As of June 20, PWSAC estimated 1,000-2,000 chum salmon in the WNH SHA for hatchery escapement, which is below the cumulative anticipated goal of 67,000 fish for this date.

ESHAMY DISTRICT: The Eshamy District, excluding the AGZ, will open to commercial gillnet harvest for a 72-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 21. A 48-hour period is anticipated to begin on Monday, June 25 at 8:00 am. Harvest from the period that closed Sunday, June 17 was 35,600 chum and 65,600 sockeye salmon with 771 deliveries reported.

UNAKWIK DISTRICT: The Unakwik District will open to commercial drift gillnet and purse seine fishing for a 24-hour period starting at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 21. The harvest for the fishing period that closed on Tuesday, June 19 is confidential.

SEINE FISHERIES: The first aerial survey for portions of Eastern, Northern and Southeastern districts is currently on hold and awaiting improvements in the weather. VFDA reports having made six test sets on Monday, June 18, with fewer than 25 fish being harvested. Cost recovery test sets continue today, the updates for which will be included on Saturday's announcement.

EASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Eastern District south of the latitude of Rocky Point will open to commercial fishing for 12 hours on Thursday, June 21 beginning at 8:00 am. Waters inside of all Eastern District Salmon Harvest Task Force (SHTF) markers will be closed for this period to ensure early season escapement. SHTF marker coordinates will be available in the Cordova ADF&G office, and will be provided to area processors, VFDA and PWSAC for distribution to fishery participants. It is anticipated that early season fishing opportunities will be limited in frequency, with time and area for subsequent openers being dependent upon escapement, harvest and effort.

SOUTHEASTERN DISTRICT: Waters of the Southeastern District will open to commercial fishing for 12 hours on Thursday, June 21 beginning at 8:00 am. It is anticipated that early season fishing opportunities will be limited in frequency, with time and area for subsequent openers dependent upon escapement, harvest and effort.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT: On the east side of Knight Island, the waters of Marsha Bay, west of 147° 39.75' W. long., will open to purse seine fishing for an 84-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 21 and a 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, June 25. Anadromous stream closures within Marsha Bay will not be in effect until further notice. No harvest has been reported to date for waters of Marsha Bay.

The waters of Sawmill Bay, including the AFK Hatchery Terminal Harvest Area (THA) and Special Harvest Area (SHA), inside of the newly defined THA line from 60° 03.66' N. lat., 147° 59.11' W. long. to 60° 02.77' N. lat., 148° 01.00' W. long. to 60° 02.76' N. lat., 148° 01.66' W. long. will open to purse seine fishing for an 84-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Thursday, June 21 and a 60-hour period beginning at 8:00 am on Monday, June 25. Anadromous stream closures within the AFK Hatchery THA and SHA will not be in effect until further notice. The preliminary harvest estimate from the 84-hour period that ended on Sunday, June 17 is 9 king, 7,168 sockeye, 6 pink and 10,715 chum salmon with 44 deliveries reported.

As a reminder, **all salmon that are harvested but not sold by commercial permit holders in Alaska waters must be reported on a fish ticket at the time of landing (5AAC 39.130(c)(10)).** Fish tickets have a "not sold/personal use" field to report these salmon.

The next scheduled salmon fisheries announcement is anticipated to be at 2:00 pm Saturday, June 23.

Permit holders are advised that unscheduled announcements based on current escapement data may occur at any time inseason either establishing an additional period or extending an open period.

Announcement recordings are available for **gillnet fisheries at 907-424-7535 and seine fisheries at 907-424-7345. In addition, announcement recordings are available in Anchorage at 267-2843.**

Additionally, announcements, inseason harvest data, and escapement data are available at the following web addresses:
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.main> (Copper River homepage) or
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareapws.main> (Prince William Sound homepage).

Unless otherwise specified, all openings are clock openings based on Alaska Daylight Time, which is based on Coordinated Universal Time and may be obtained by calling 303-499-7111.

The department encourages commercial permit holders to renew their licenses early and to check their CFEC vessel registration stickers to make sure that they are current.

The department also encourages permit holders to report observed violations to Wildlife Safeguard at 800-478-3377. Reports are anonymous and cash rewards may be paid for successful prosecution of violations.

PWS commercial fishers are reminded that area fisheries often necessitate fishing in close proximity to marine mammals. Under the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA), the PWS drift gillnet fishery is classified as a Category II fishery. Participants in Category I and II fisheries must be registered in the Marine Mammal Avoidance Program (MMAP) to be authorized for lawful incidental, but not intentional, marine mammal takes during fishing. However, this authorization explicitly does **not** exempt holders of commercial fishing permits from the MMPA prohibition on takes of marine mammals listed as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As a participant in the PWS drift gillnet fishery you are automatically registered in the Marine Mammal Authorization Program (MMAP) by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). As a participant in a Category II fishery, you must:

- Maintain an MMAP Authorization Certificate, or a photocopy, on board the vessel while engaging in any of the fisheries identified on the reverse side of the certificate. For non-vessel or set net fisheries, the enclosed Certificate, or a photocopy, must be in the possession of the permit holder during fishing operations. This Certificate, in combination with a current, valid state or Federal fishing permit, will serve as your authorization to incidentally take non-endangered or non-threatened marine mammals in the course of commercial fishing operations.

- Report all injuries and mortalities of marine mammals within 48 hours of returning from the trip during which these takes occurred using the MMAP Mortality/Injury Reporting Form (visit http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/interactions/mmap_reporting_form.pdf for a copy).
- If so requested, take an observer aboard your vessel.

Purse seine and set gillnet gear are classified as a category III fisheries under the MMPA. Category III fishery participants are automatically exempted from the incidental take prohibition in the MMPA. Therefore, you do not need to maintain the MMAP certificate aboard your vessel, but must report any incidental takes of marine mammals within 48 hours of the incident or your return to port. Such reports must be made on the Marine Mammals Authorization Program Mortality/Injury Reporting Form.

Because some marine mammals are also listed under the Endangered Species Act, incidental takes are also regulated under that act and are not authorized. **All** MMPA category fisheries are liable for incidentally taking ESA listed species.

Please reference http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/pr/pdfs/esa_factsheet.pdf for a list of marine mammals currently listed under the ESA (you should periodically check with the National Marine Fisheries Service for any changes in listed species). Under the ESA, take means to “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” 16U.S.C. 1532(19); and harass means an “intentional or negligent act or omission which creates the likelihood of injury to the wildlife by annoying it to such an extent as to significantly disrupt normal behavioral patterns which include, but are not limited to, breeding, feeding, or sheltering.” (50 C.F.R. 17.3).

To reduce the possibility of incidentally taking an ESA listed species and its associated liability ADF&G recommends that:

- Fishermen participating in area fisheries remain vigilant in monitoring gear when marine mammals may be present.
- Fishermen use avoidance measures (e.g., not fishing or relocating fishing activities when marine mammals are present or likely to be present) to minimize interactions with marine mammals.
- Avoid fishing in areas where marine mammals are likely to be present at night or when visibility or weather conditions make it difficult to spot marine mammals.

For further questions concerning marine mammal regulations call NMFS at 907-271-5006.